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SUBJECT: FRENCH EXPECT A PRODUCTIVE SEPTEMBER GAERC

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[1](#)B. STATE 97574

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Kathleen
Allegre for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. On September 12, MFA deputy for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Mathieu Carmona said the September 15-16 GAERC will focus on implementation of next steps on Georgia, including deployment of the EU observer mission by October 1. The GAERC will also decide the mandate and name of the new EU Special Representative for Georgia. Regarding Zimbabwe, the EU is unlikely to take any actions in immediate response to the announcement of a national unity government, since its implementation remains to be seen. The GAERC will issue conclusions agreeing to the creation of a coordination cell for EU members' contributions to anti-piracy patrols near Somalia. Carmona said no movement is expected on Serbia pending ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz's report, which he said could still come as early as this GAERC meeting. The GAERC will also produce a marker for the Government of Belarus regarding conduct of this month's elections. End summary.

Georgia

[1](#)2. (C) Carmona said the GAERC discussion would focus on three follow-on areas from the September 1 European Council and September 5-6 Gymnich meetings: deployment of the EU observer mission, appointment of an EU Special Representative, and organization of the donors' conference. Carmona said France was heartened to see a number of other member-states stepping forward to contribute observers to the 200-strong EU mission that must be deployed by October 1. He stated that France had been prepared to contribute 200 gendarmes, but that half that number was more likely in light of other contributions. For the EU Special Representative (EUSR), not just the name but also the mandate will be decided. The GOF prefers that the EUSR focus on application of point 6 of the August 12 ceasefire accord, including preparations for the Geneva conference. The French candidate, Pierre Morel, who is currently EU Special Representative for Central Asia, remains in play. Carmona said the new EUSR will need to work closely with the existing EUSR for the South Caucasus, Swedish diplomat Peter Semneby, as well as with the EU observer presence on the ground. Whether the EUSR will represent the EU at the Geneva conference would be determined later. On the final point, the donors' conference, Carmona merely said the timeframe is mid-October, with the location also to be determined, and the European Commission will have the lead on organizing.

[1](#)3. (C) In a side discussion, Carmona expressed his view that the EU may be learning through the Georgia crisis that its "soft power" tools are more effective than it realized. Though developments could change this initial optimism, Carmona said EU unity has been reinforced. In his view, the EU has converged fully on the current approach of forceful diplomacy, with the former Soviet member-states no longer

calling for a harder line such as sanctions and the Germans also supporting the common view rather than a more pacifist approach. He said the Georgia crisis may be "constructive" for the EU in the respect that it has offered the first opportunity for the EU at 27 to discuss pragmatically EU-Russia relations, discussions were previously impossible due to more ideological positions from countries like Lithuania and Poland.

Zimbabwe

14. (C) Carmona said preparations for the GAERC discussion on Zimbabwe were still actively underway, following the relatively late-breaking news of the establishment of a national unity government. All agree thus far that the power-sharing deal is positive in principle, but that its implementation remains to be seen. Carmona said that new sanctions would not be undertaken, but the existing sanctions on individuals will be maintained, "probably for a long time." He stressed that the agreement did not mean amnesty for individuals, especially those responsible for violence. Prior to the announcement of the national unity government, as reported separately on September 8, MFA desk officer Isabelle de Boisgelen said France was still reviewing a list of additional individuals to be sanctioned, and that France was "on the same line" as the U.S. with respect to points two and three of the non-paper.

Somalia

15. (C) According to Carmona, the GAERC will produce conclusions agreeing to the creation of a coordination cell that would coordinate EU members' contributions to anti-piracy patrols near Somalia. Carmona said the mission would initially consist of a French ship and a Spanish ship, plus the coordination cell that could later support a full ESDP mission. The Council Secretariat has identified a Military Strategic Option (MSO), one step to an eventual ESDP mission that would have the goals of protecting World Food Program convoys, Gulf of Aden shipping routes, and fishing vessels (the Spanish priority). Carmona said both the Germans and the Dutch have expressed interest in contributing to an eventual formal ESDP mission, though in separate consultations on September 12, MFA Somalia desk officer Thierry Caboche said no EU members had identified and committed specific vessels to the task so far, including France. Post will report more details from that discussion septel. Carmona added that the conclusions will express the EU's intent to continue to follow developments in Somalia itself, following the August 19 signature of the Djibouti accord, but especially as the dire humanitarian situation may be exacerbating with little attention from the outside world (due in part to the lack of journalists on the ground).

Serbia

16. (C) Carmona acknowledged that the Netherlands is still blocking implementation of the interim trade accord, but said ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz could still come to the GAERC to report. He said the Netherlands' reaction to a positive report from Brammertz, in the absence of further arrests, is not yet known. Though EU member-states continue to appreciate the Serbian government's pro-European stance, including lack of interference with EULEX, Carmona said that will not translate into anything concrete at the September GAERC.

Belarus

17. (C) Carmona said conclusions would be issued on Belarus, to lay down a marker for the Government of Belarus regarding conduct of the September 28 elections. He said there was consensus among the 27 that Belarus should be reengaged, but not on how far or how fast, questions that will be answered

after the elections. He noted that Belarusian FM Martynov has been very "pushy" and expressed a personal view that Belarus is playing an old game of playing the West off Russia and vice-versa.

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